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NT 640 Exegesis of General Epistles

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NT 640 Exegesis of General Epistles

Preliminary Version. Subject to Change.

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Spring 2004

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Office Hours: Wednesdays 9-11:30 ET; Other Times by Arrangement

First: “The development of this extended learning syllabus is intended for distribution to members of the course and others by my permission. It is not intended for general distribution on the internet. Permission to copy, in whole or in part, must be requested from the professor (RuthAnne Reese).” **Thanks for honoring these instructions.**

Welcome to NT640 Exl. I am looking forward to teaching this course during which we will have an opportunity to study some of the General Epistles, to explore the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts out of which they arose, and to examine the theology of the text. It will be our goal to draw all of this together into a coherent way of understanding and proclaiming these epistles in the contexts where we live and work.

Prerequisites: Concise or Comprehensive Greek, IBS 1, and New Testament Introduction are all prerequisites for this class.

Office Hours: I will be keeping virtual office hours on Wednesday mornings from about 9am to 11:30am Eastern Time. During this time I will be logged into the system and will be responding to all of your postings (in the order in which they were received). I will also be checking on the class periodically throughout the week. However, Friday is my writing day, and I am not available to students on that day. I will let you know if I am going to be away during my office hours or for any extended time during the semester. Please let me know if you will be away for any extended periods as well. We can also arrange times to chat or to speak via telephone either during my office hours or by special appointment. Just let me know if you would like to set that up. **Note: If you have an urgent matter, please flag your email with the word Urgent in the subject line.**

Work Load: This course has a steady workload. It requires careful reading of the biblical text using the Greek language to the best of your ability, commentary reading, and required textbook reading. It also requires regular postings both

individually and in teams. I recommend using the syllabus to help guide you as you prepare for the semester's workload.

Support Staff:

For **general questions and administrative assistance regarding the ExL program**, contact Dale Hale:

ExL_Office@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: (859) 858-2393

For **technical support, library research support, library loans**, and **ExL media** contact Information Commons:

Info_Commons@asburyseminary.edu

Phone: (859) 858-2233

Toll-free: (866) 454-2733

Accessing Information Commons Materials:

1. General Questions:

- The Information Commons is a "one-stop shop" for all student research, circulation and technical needs. The Information Commons hours are posted here:

<http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/hours.shtml>.

2. Materials Requests:

- To search the library catalog for available materials, click here: <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml>

- ExL Students may request books, photocopies or emailed attachments of journal articles/reference books from Asbury Seminary's Library. Please allow 3-10 business days for all requests to be filled. Contact the Information Commons for costs and instructions on how to make requests.

- ExL students are encouraged to make use of local library resources. Students who live within a 50 mile radius of either the Florida or the Kentucky campus should come to campus to obtain their materials.

3. Research Questions:

- ExL students are encouraged to contact the Information Commons for research assistance including help choosing a paper topic, determining the best sources to use for a paper, finding book reviews, or research questions about using the online databases or any other library materials.

4. Online Databases:

- To access the online library resources including the library catalog and full-text journal databases, go to <http://www.asburyseminary.edu/icommons/index.shtml> and enter your 10-digit student ID# number in the login box. Your student ID# is provided on the biographical information section of the student registration webpage. Add a 2 and enough 0's to the front to make a 10-digit number (20000XXXXX where XXXXX = your student id).

THE VIRTUAL CLASSROOM

The Course Icon: This is located on the First Class desktop. Use this icon to enter the classroom.

Course Center: This is the location where all of the modules will be posted.

Office: This icon is used to post things to the professor. All postings to this icon are private and will only be read by the professor. Please use this icon/address rather than my personal email address.

Team Folders: This is the location where you will carry on discussion in your teams. Each member of the class will be assigned to a team. You will only be able to read other team mates postings. People from the larger class, who are not on your team, cannot post material in your team folder.

Prayer Folder: Any needs or prayer requests, praises, etc. can be placed into this folder so that we as a class may keep members of the class in prayer at important junctures in their lives. I also commit to pray for each of my students at least once each week during the semester, so if you have particular concerns you would like me to remember feel free to let me know.

Archives Center: When we are finished with a module or a section of a module, I will move the discussion and work that has been generated from the module into the archive center. You can access things in the archive center, but you cannot change, delete, or add to them. They are a reference source for you to consult if you have questions about previous class material.

Resource Center: This icon links you to various resources like the library and specific sources available through the internet.

Discussion Center: The discussion center is the lower part of the classroom. When you click on the classroom icon you will see postings that are to be read by the whole class.

Description: This is a course on the General Epistles, their content, their context, their interpretation, and their theology. In the course of the semester, we will study Jude, James, and 1 Peter; the Jewish and Greco-Roman contexts out of which they arose; various types of interpretative methods used to study the epistles; and theological themes in the epistle. We will work to draw this knowledge together into a means for thinking about the General Epistles in our contemporary context.

COURSE OBJECTIVES: By the end of this course you will be able to:

- Employ a range of exegetical approaches relevant to the interpretation of the General Epistles, and to apply those approaches to other NT books of similar genre;
- Understand the General Epistles within their socio-historical, literary, and canonical contexts;
- Identify central issues in the critical study of the General Epistles;
- Articulate the importance of one's own presuppositions in the task of interpretation;
- Articulate primary theological and ethical concerns of the General Epistles;
- Demonstrate awareness of how the theological and ethical concerns of the General Epistles contribute to those of the canon and of constructive theology and ethics;
- Differentiate between critical and homiletic/devotional commentaries and studies of the General Epistles and other NT books; and
- Evaluate critically the usefulness of secondary literature in the study of the General Epistles.

Concise Greek Students should be able to:

- Use Greek-based language tools to demonstrate proficiency in lexical semantics;
- Use Greek-based language tools to identify grammatical constructions (i.e, with regard to sentence structure and use of clauses);
- Use Greek-based language tools to engage in syntactical analyses (i.e, with regard to verbal aspect, mood, and voice; use of the genitive and dative cases).

Course Guidelines:

1. Assignments: Papers should be typed, double spaced in a 12 point font using one inch margins. All assignments are due by the stated due dates. These are outlined below for your reference. Late assignments will be penalized one third of a letter grade per day late. For example, a B paper turned in one day late becomes a B-, etc.

2. **Postings:** Individual postings in the Discussion Center, in the Question Folder, and in your team folder should be limited to between 50 and 75 words.
3. **Grammar:** I expect us (myself included) to use proper English grammar at all times. This includes complete sentences, punctuation, capitalization, and spelling. For assistance in this area, consult a standard style guide such as Carole Slade, *Form and Style: Research Papers, Reports, and Theses* (11th ed., Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1999). Poor grammar will be reflected in the final grade.
4. **Discussion:** A crucial element of this course is the dialogue that we enter into with each other. All discussions are to be in the vein of encouragement, gentleness, patience, persistence, and hope. This does not mean that we will not challenge, confront, or question each other. It does mean that these things will be undertaken for the purpose of growth and stimulation to think and understand the subject at hand more deeply and more intimately.

Course Requirements:

- (1) Class preparation, attendance, and participation (10%): Each student should prepare for each class by (1) carefully reading the assigned texts, (2) making their own notes on the text, and (3) comparing their observations with those made in one of the required commentaries below. Participation grades will be based on comments and observations made in the Discussion Center and in Team Folders.
- (2) Annotated chapter outlines of James (3% x 5 = 15%): For each chapter of James, you will make an outline of the chapter.
- (3) Interpretive Assignments (10% x 3 = 30%): On 3 class sessions prepare in advance and turn in at the beginning of the session an interpretive assignment addressing a pericope within the chapter assigned for that class session. Interpretive assignments should be approximately 4 double spaced pages (i.e., approx. 1,000 words). For more information on these assignments see the document in the Assignments folder in the Course Center.
- (4) Commentary Review (15%): Write a critical review comparing and contrasting at least two of the required commentaries below. General guidelines on book reviews are available in the Assignments folder in the Course Center.
- (5) Final Exegetical Paper or Project (30%): a paper on a passage or topic of your choosing related to the General Epistles.

GRADING

I want to encourage both your own interpretive work on the General Epistles as well as dialogue with other members of the class around your work. I have asked that you post the answers to many of the participation assignments in your team folder. **The most effective way to do your work will be to do your own**

work and post it to the team folder or question folder PRIOR to reading your teammates' work.

Asbury Seminary defines grades using the following criteria (catalog, p. 24):

A= Exceptional work: outstanding or surpassing achievement of course objectives

B= Good work: strong, significant achievement of course objectives

C= Acceptable work: essential achievement of course objectives

D= Marginal work: minimal or inadequate achievement of course objectives

F= Unacceptable work: failure to achieve course objectives

A plus (+) or minus (-) indicates positions between categories (for example, B+ = very good; C- = slightly below acceptable, etc.).

A Special Comment on Preparation and Participation Grades:

The Participation assignments listed in the syllabus consist of two parts: (1) a task or an answer to a question or questions and (2) the posing of your own questions. The tasks/answers should be sent to the office, and the questions should be posted to the questions folder.

As in a physical class, it is my expectation that you will come to the online class ready to participate fully in the totality of the course. An online class presents some challenges for the teacher regarding grading. I often give individual and group assignments in my physical class that are not graded but which I monitor and respond to as needed. In a similar fashion, I expect all participation assignments to be completed in a timely and thoughtful manner; however, I will only be grading 4 of the 8 participation assignments. These will be selected on a random basis. Also, team projects/assignments will be graded mainly on the basis of the final product with consideration for each team member's contribution also being taken into account in some instances.

Important Notes on My Grading Policies:

1. Interpretive Assignments are NEVER accepted late
2. Other late papers are marked down 1/3 of a letter grade per day late.
3. Poor grammar figures into the final grade.
4. Papers that are too long (over the word limit) or too short (under the word limit) are marked down. (I don't count words, so if you are over or under by 50 words that isn't going to matter, but if you have many pages or almost no pages, then you need to rewrite your paper before you submit it.)
5. Participation grades are based on quality and responsiveness of contribution.
6. You may complete as many of the 6 interpretive assignments as you would like (I take the 3 highest grades to count towards your final grade).

7. You may consult with me before turning in papers and projects to see if you are on the right track.
8. You may seek my direction or input on your final research paper at any stage before you turn in your final paper. Take advantage of this; it will be to your benefit.

How to Submit Your Work

If you send your work as an attachment please use the following formula to name your attached file:

Your last name followed by IA for interpretive assignment followed by the number, 1,2, 3, etc., CR for commentary review, and RP for research paper. For example, if I were turning in my first interpretive assignment using an attachment I would call it ReeseIA#1. Your assistance in this way will help me keep all the papers that I get in order. Thanks.

Using Greek Fonts

It is important to me to encourage you to use both Greek and Hebrew. Please follow these instructions so that you may use Greek fonts in the papers that you submit. Download the Bwgrkl font that is in the Resource Center in our Course Folder onto your hard drive. Then load this font into your word processing program. Use this font for all your Greek work. This should guarantee that I will be able to read all of the Greek that you type in, and there should not be a compatibility problem.

Required Reading:

Chester, Andrew and Ralph Martin. *The Theology of the Letters of James, Peter, and Jude*. New Testament Theology. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1994.

Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Letter of James*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1995.

Maynard-Reid, Pedrito U. *Poverty and Wealth in James*. Reprinted Wipf & Stock, 2004. First published, Orbis, 1987. (only available from the Asbury bookstore)

Reese, Ruth Anne. *Jude, 2 Peter*. Unpublished manuscript available in the Course Center.

Reading Material Posted in the Course Center

Buy ONE of the following commentaries (Hints below)

Bauckham, Richard. *Jude, 2 Peter*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word, 1983. ([Available via Prolepsis, see below under using Prolepsis](#))

Green, Michael. *The Second Epistle General of Peter and the General Epistle of Jude*. 2nd, ed. Tyndale New Testament Commentaries. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1987.

Neyrey, Jerome. *2 Peter, Jude*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1993.
Johnson, Luke Timothy. *The Letter of James*. Anchor Bible. Garden City, NY: Doubleday, 1995.

Buy ONE of the following commentaries (Hints below)

Law, Sophia. *The Epistle of James*. Peabody, MA: Hendrickson, 1980.

Martin, Ralph. *James*. Word Biblical Commentary. Waco, TX: Word, 1988.

(Available via Prolepsis, see below under using Prolepsis)

Wall, Robert. *Community of the Wise*. Valley Forge, PA: Trinity Press International, 1997.

Recommended Reading:

Bauckham, Richard. *James*. London: Routledge, 2001.

Green, Joel B. (ed.). *Hearing the New Testament*. Grand Rapids, MI: Eerdmans, 1995.

Using Prolepsis:

To use the Prolepsis server it must be downloaded onto your computer. Follow these instructions to download Prolepsis. Open First Class; Open the Intranet folder; Open the Resources folder; Open the Prolepsis Databases folder; Read the Read First document; install Prolepsis. You will want to use the Logos Bible software. Inside this software you can access the Word volumes on James by Martin and on Jude and 2 Peter by Bauckham as well as the Anchor Bible Dictionary. If you have technical problems with downloading or using the software, you should contact Andy Adams in ExL Support. If you have reference problems you should contact Hannah Kirsch in the library.

Schedule

Module 1 (Feb 7-25)

Introduction with Practice in Jude

Week 1: Introduction to Exegesis

Week 2: Jude

Week 3: Jude and Theology

Module 2 (Feb 26-Apr 1)

2 Peter

Week 4: Intro to 2 Peter & ch. 1

Week 5: 2 Peter 2

Week 6: 2 Peter 3

Week 7: READING WEEK (Mar 21-25)

Week 8: 2 Peter and Theology

Due Dates: Mar 1, Interpretive Assignment #1
Mar 8, Interpretive Assignment #2
Mar 15, Interpretive Assignment #3
Mar 29, Commentary Review

Module 3 (Apr 2-May 12)

James

Week 9: Intro to James & James 1
Week 10: James 2
Week 11: James 3
Week 12: James 4
Week 13: James 5
Week 14: James and Theology

Due Dates: Apr 5, Chapter Outline 1 AND Interpretive Assignment #4
Apr 12, Chapter Outline 2 AND Interpretive Assignment # 5
Apr 19, Chapter Outline 3
Apr 26, Chapter Outline 4 AND Interpretive Assignment # 6
May 3, Chapter Outline 5

Week 15: FINALS

Due Date: Final Research Papers Due Tuesday, May 17